

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 03687 252107Z  
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 SAB-02 EB-08 COME-00 AGRE-00 /088 W  
-----117926 260736Z /23

R 252104Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7197  
INFO USINT HAVANA  
PANCANAL  
AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
USSOUTHCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 03687

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINR, EEWT, PN, KN  
SUBJECT: NORTH KOREAN COMMERCIAL DELEGATION IN PANAMA

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS THAT 3-MAN NORTH KOREAN COMMERCIAL DELEGATION IS IN PANAMA TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF INCREASED TRADE BETWEEN NORTH KOREA AND PANAMA. DURING THEIR STAY, IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE GROUP WILL VISIT THE COLON FREE ZONE, NATIONAL PORT AUTHORITY, AND THE OFFICES OF COMUNBANA, THE ASSOCIATION OF BANANA-EXPORTING COUNTRIES. MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ARE: PAK DOK ZIN - HEAD OF THE DELEGATION AND PRESIDENT OF PONGHWA STATE COMPANY; KIM MYONG JAE - AN OFFICIAL OF PONGHWA; AND KIM JONG KA - INTERPRETER. END UNCLASSIFIED.

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL.

2. EMBOFFS DISCUSSED VISIT WITH OFFICIAL OF THE SOUTH KOREAN (ROK) EMBASSY, AND HE WAS OF THE OPINION THAT IT WAS MERELY A PLOY ON THE PART OF THE NORTH KOREANS TO OBTAIN A Foothold IN PANAMA. HE OPINED THAT, WHILE IT MIGHT VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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WELL IMPORT GOODS FROM PANAMA SUCH AS BANANAS, SUGAR, ETC., NORTH KOREA HAD NOTHING TO SELL. THUS, THE REAL MOTIVE BEHIND SUCH A TRADE MISSION IS POLITICAL RATHER THAN COMMERCIAL. THE ROK OFFICIAL NOTED THAT THE NORTH KOREANS HAVE BEEN MORE ACTIVE OF LATE, OPERATING OUT OF CUBA. HOWEVER, THE DELEGATION NOW IN PANAMA CAME DIRECTLY FROM KOREA WITH ONLY A BRIEF STOP IN HAVANA. THE SOUTH KOREANS

ARE CLOSELY MONITORING THIS SITUATION AND THEIR AMBASSADOR HAS ALREADY MADE KNOWN THEIR CONCERN TO THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE. THE DELEGATION IS EXPECTED TO LEAVE PANAMA MAY 26.

3. EXCEPT FOR A BRIEF MENTION IN TWO NEWSPAPERS, THE TRIP HAS RECEIVED NO PUBLICITY, AND NO CONTACTS WITH HIGH-LEVEL GOP OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN REPORTED. THE ROK EMBASSY EXPECTS THAT THE NORTH KOREANS WILL EVENTUALLY ESTABLISH A SMALL COMMERCIAL OFFICE. HOWEVER, NEITHER THE EMBASSY NOR THE SOUTH KOREANS FEEL THAT ANY MOVE TO ESTABLISH FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN PANAMA AND NORTH KOREA IS COMING ANYTIME SOON. JORDEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TRADE PROMOTION, TRADE VISITS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014